

Planting and cultivating dove fields is a popular and successful technique used by sportsmen, landowners, and land managers to attract and concentrate doves. Careful planning is essential to producing a successful and legal dove field.

This brochure provides the legal guidelines for planting and managing dove fields in South Carolina. A successful dove field displays visible and tangible results in a relatively short period of time, benefits many species of wildlife, and may provide outstanding dove hunting opportunities. There are several important factors to be considered when planning a dove field:

- Choosing the appropriate crop
- Site selection
- Size, shape, and distribution of food plots
- Seeding rates
- Planting depth
- Maturation time
- Maintenance and management
- Cost and availability of plant materials
- Weed and insect control

For more information and recommendations on planting wildlife food plots, contact your local South Carolina Department of Natural Resources office or order a copy of the Clemson Extension Wildlife Planting Guide: Native Wildlife Plants in South Carolina from the website <http://www.clemson.edu/public/>.

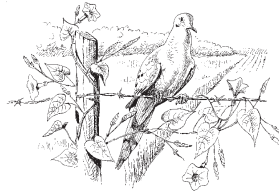


## Recommended Dove Plantings

Plant Species	Planting Dates (maturing time)	Seeding Rate	Planting Depth	Recommendations
Browntop Millet	May 15-July 15 (60-70 days)	Rows: 30-42 inches apart @ 8-10 lbs./acre Drilled: 20-35 lbs./acre Broadcast: 25 lbs./acre	1/8 - 1/4 inches	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Plant 3 acres or more 60-80 days before season</li> <li>• Several plantings 2-4 weeks apart</li> <li>• If drilled, need to mow strips, can burn or rake mowed strips.</li> </ul>
Dove Proso Millet	May 1-July 1 (80-90 days)	Rows: 30-42 inches apart @ 8-10 lbs./acre Drilled: 20-35 lbs./acre Broadcast: 25 lbs./acre	1/4 - 1/2 inches	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Plant 3 acres or more</li> <li>• Row planting is best for doves</li> <li>• If drilled, need to mow strips, can burn or rake mowed strips.</li> </ul>
White Proso Millet	May 1-July 1 (80-90 days)	Rows: 30-42 inches apart @ 8-10 lbs./acre Drilled: 20-35 lbs./acre Broadcast: 25 lbs./acre	1/4 - 1/2 inches	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Plant 3 acres or more</li> <li>• Row planting is best for doves</li> <li>• If drilled, need to mow strips, can burn or rake mowed strips.</li> </ul>
Sunflowers	April 1-July 1 (110-120 days)	Seeds 8-10 inches apart in rows 36 inches apart (6-10 lbs./acre)	1 inch	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Plant 5 acres or more</li> <li>• May shred or mow part of the field as season approaches</li> <li>• Small seeded oil-type sunflowers are preferred.</li> <li>• Requires cultivation and herbicide to control weed competition.</li> <li>• Damage from deer browsing is likely.</li> </ul>
Corn	March 1-April 30 150 days	12-15 lbs./acre in rows 36-40 inches apart	1 - 1 1/2 inches	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Leave corn standing around edge of field, harvest mechanically, burn after harvest, or use normal agricultural practices with seeds remaining in the field.</li> </ul>
Sorghum	May 15-July 1 (80-140 days)	3-5 plants/linear ft. in rows 30-36 inches apart (usually 4-7 lbs./acre)	1 inch	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Known for being drought tolerant.</li> </ul>
Wheat	Oct. 1-Nov. 30 (230-260 days)	80-100 lbs./acre (broadcast or drilled)	1 inch	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Seed must be covered at planting</li> <li>• Mow or burn after maturity to attract doves.</li> </ul>
Sesame (Benne)	May 1-June 1 (120-150 days)	Rows: 36 inches apart @ 5-6 lbs./acre	1 - 2 inches	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 3-4 discings in May before planting will help to control weeds.</li> </ul>

## Points to Remember

- Top-sowing, or broadcasting without covering the seed, is not considered a normal agricultural practice and is an illegal procedure for planting dove fields.
- Doves prefer to land in clear areas between rows. Keep these areas as weed free as possible by cultivating or using herbicides.
- Plan for at least a portion of the field to mature 2 weeks prior to shooting.
- Plan dove fields with a variety of plantings, providing for different maturation dates, in order to continue attracting doves throughout the season. (Example: browntop millet, proso millet, and sunflowers)
- Scout fields several weeks in advance to determine use by doves.
- Too much shooting pressure will cause doves to move to other areas. Limit shooting to 1-2 days a week.
- Manipulating portions of the field by mowing, chopping, burning, or disking prior to hunting will help expose seeds and attract doves to the field.



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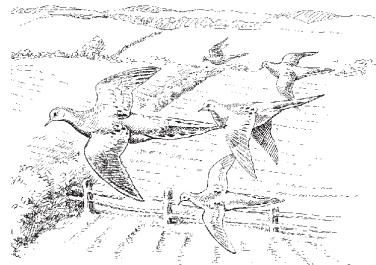
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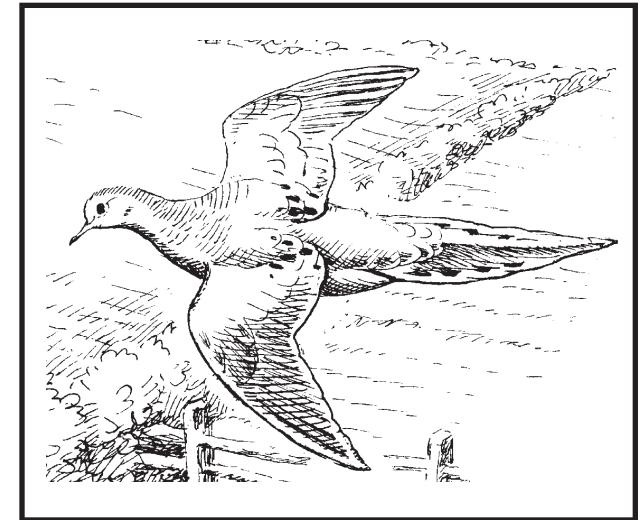
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# Attracting Doves... Legally

## South Carolina's Official Planting Guide for Dove Fields



Legal guidelines for  
planting and managing dove fields  
in South Carolina



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and Extension Program